

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSC-01 CU-02

SAM-01 EB-07 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /060 W

----- 065884

O R 070950Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 584

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 2239

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV,TH

SUBJ: STATUS OF GOVERNMENT FORMATION

REF: BANGKOK 2166

BEGIN SUMMARY:

POLITICIANS AND STUDENTS ARE STILL SORTING OUT THE
IMPLICATIONS OF PRASIT KANCHANAWAT'S ELECTION AS
HOUSE SPEAKER. THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY HOPES TO RE-
VIVE KHUKRIT PRAMOT'S CHANCES OF BECOMING PRIME MINISTER.
STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST TEMCO MAY TURN INTO A
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PROTEST AGAINST PRASIT'S ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE POLITICAL EFFECTS PRASIT KANCHANAWAT'S ELECTION AS HOUSE SPEAKER REMAIN MURKY. PREASIT CANNOT FORMALLY SOUND OUT THE POLITICAL PARTIES ON THE SELECTION OF A PRIME MINISTER UNTIL THE KING SIGNS PRASIT'S APPOINTMENT AS HOUSE SPEAKER. THAI NATION PARTY LEADER PRAMAN ADIREKSAN CALLED A PRESS CONFERENCE AT HIS HOUSE FEBRUARY 7, BUT WAS NOT PRESENT WHEN REPORTERS ARRIVED SO NOTHING TOOK PLACE.

2. ALTHOUGH MOST SOURCES CONTINUE TO SPECULATE THAT PRASIT WILL NAME EITHER PRAMAN OR THAI NATION SECRETARY GENERAL CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN TO TRY TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY (SAP) WILL TRY TO PLACE KHUKRIT PRAMOT AT THE HEAD OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH THE CONSERVATIVES. A SAP MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT TOLD AN EMBASSY POLITICAL ASSISTANT THAT ALL SAP MEMBERS IN THE HOUSE VOTED WITH THE CONSERVATIVES FOR PRASIT AS HOUSE SPEAKER BECAUSE THE CHANCES OF FORMING A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT WITH THE CONSERVATIVES ARE GREATER THAN THE CHANCES OF THE DEMOCRATS DOING SO. (THE REAL REASON IS PROBABLY THAT SAP WILL HAVE A CRACK AT SOME CABINET POSITIONS UNDER A CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT.) SAP MET FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS OF THE SPEAKER AND DECIDED TO USE ITS 18 VOTES TO BARGAIN WITH THE CONSERVATIVE PARTIES, SAYING IT WILL REFUSE TO JOIN A COALITION WITH THE CONSERVATIVES UNLESS KHUKRIT BECOMES PRIME MINISTER. SAP WILL ALSO DEMAND TWO OTHER MINISTER AND THREE DEPUTY MINISTER POSTS IN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. SAP REASONS, PERHAPS FALSELY IN THE KALEIDOSCOPIC SHIFTING OF THAI POLITICAL FEALTY, THAT WITHOUT ITS 18 VOTES THE CONSERVATIVES CANNOT FORM A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT.

3. TWELVE STUDENT GROUPS MET AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY ON FEBRUARY 6. THEY ISSUED A JOINT COMMUNIQUE DENOUNCING THE VOTE-BUYING IN THE SPEAKERSHIP ELECTION. STUDENTS AND SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS ARE SCHEDULED TO SPEAK AT SANAM LUANG LATER FEBRUARY 7 AGAINST THE TEMCO MINING CONCESSION. DR. PUAU UNPHAKON TOLD THE AMBASSADOR FEBRUARY 7 THAT THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION AGAINST TEMCO

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WOULD TURN ITS ATTENTION TO THE HOUSE SPEAKERSHIP ISSUE. SONTI LIMTHONGKUN, NEW MANAGING EDITOR OF "PRACHATHIPATAI", TOLD USIS OFFICERS FEBRUARY 7 THAT THE STUDENTS ARE PLANNING A PROTEST DEMONSTRATION AGAINST PRASIT'S ELECTION AS HOUSE SPEAKER. BOTH PUAU AND SONTI INDICATED THAT KHUKRIT IS THE MOST LIKELY PROSPECT TO BECOME PRIME MINISTER.

4. THERE IS NO POINT IN COMMITTING THE FOLLY AT THIS STAGE OF PRE-DICTING WHICH OF THESE SEVERAL RUMORED CANDIDATES WILL GET THE NOD FOR THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP.
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